

## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

5 [00139] System architecture and corresponding method for securing communication via a network (e.g. IEEE 802.11) is provided. In accordance with one embodiment, the present system and method protocol, may be suitably configured to achieve mutual authentication by using a shared secret to establish a tunnel used to protect weaker authentication methods (e.g. user names and passwords). The shared secret, referred to in this embodiment as the protected access credential may be 10 advantageously used to mutually authenticate a server and a peer upon securing a tunnel for communication via a network.

[00140] The present system and method disclosed and claimed herein, in one aspect thereof, comprises the steps of 1) providing a communication implementation between a first and a second party; 2) provisioning a secure credential between the first and the 15 second party; and 3) establishing a secure tunnel between the first and the second party using the secure credential.